

# INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

Florida Department of State ♦ Sandra B. Mortham, Secretary of State ♦ Office of International Relations ♦ May 1998

## Chinese Delegation Visits Florida

Vice Chairman Tian Jiyun, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranking government official in China, and a delegation of 14 other officials visited Florida this month as part of an agricultural and economic development mission. Jiyun, who is the Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, spent several days in Orlando visiting the area farms and meeting with representatives from the Florida Department of Agricultural to study specific types of crops. Consul General Wu Zurong and Counselor Fu Wei Dong from the Chinese Embassy joined Vice Chairman Jiyun in Orlando.

## Space Summit to Be Held in Florida

The heads of space agencies from the United States, Russia, Europe, and Japan are expected to meet on May 31<sup>st</sup> in Cape Canaveral to discuss a launch timetable for the new international space station. The space station is the most ambitious international space program ever undertaken, with the U.S., Canada, Japan and 11 countries in the European Space Agency collaborating on its design, development, and operation. At the Cape Canaveral summit, agency heads will ensure the technical reliability of the station and decide on final phase launching dates.

## Israel Celebrates Its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Secretary Mortham would like to congratulate Israel, who was recognized on April 30<sup>th</sup>, for celebrating 50 years of statehood. The Florida Legislature passed a ceremonial resolution which "expresses admiration for [Israel's] many accomplishments, and extends best wishes for a peaceful future." In addition, South Florida - whose Jewish community ranks among the largest in the nation - will hold anniversary celebrations throughout the next six weeks.

## Haitian Festival '98

On May 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, South Florida celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Roots and Culture Festival. The theme of this year's event, which featured carnival rides and music, was "Honoring Our Heroes."

## Universal Studios Looks to Japan

Universal Studios in Florida recently unveiled its plan to build Universal Studios, Japan, a \$1.3 billion theme park in western Japan, its first outside the United States. The 133-acre park will include some of the most popular attractions of Universal Studios in California and Florida. The park will be located near the international airport in Osaka. The company said it chose Japan due to the number of Japanese and other Asian visitors in recent years to the Universal Studios parks in Hollywood and Orlando.

## How Consular Officers Can Help

Ever wonder exactly what consular officers do? Here are some 1997 statistics from the U.S. Department of State that show some of the duties of our U.S. consuls abroad.

- responded to 14,000 requests for assistance by private U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad
- assisted families whose loved ones - some 6,000 - died abroad, including as many as 2,000 cases in which remains were returned
- handled about 2,700 arrest cases, including some 13,000 visits to Americans incarcerated overseas
- provided assistance to Americans involved in accidents, victims of crime, and those who suffered medical emergencies
- helped American parents adopt nearly 13,500 children abroad
- maintained travel warnings and consular information sheets for each country
- replaced some 200,000 passports overseas - many on an emergency basis
- provided guidance on thousands of complex cases of nationality and citizenship, judicial and notarial services, and estate and property claims
- in two years, conducted five evacuations of U.S. citizens in unstable and violent countries